

(b)(6)

From: Forrest, Kevin
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 9:53 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: New Hampshire Veterans Home Infection Control Assessment

Thx

Kevin

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Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 10:35 AM

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Subject: New Hampshire Veterans Home Infection Control Assessment

I visited the NH Veterans Home on 12/1/2020.

I toured the facility with (b)(6) We debriefed after the tour and I spoke with them about my recommendations, I will also email this list to them.

Strong Practices that have been implemented include:

- Veteran placement: there are separate areas for positive, negative, and exposed/quarantined Veterans. Veterans testing positive or showing COVID-19 symptoms are quickly being moved and isolated appropriately.
- Symptom checks are occurring every shift for Veterans and employees.
- Donning and doffing stations for PPE are set up appropriately.
- The set up of the facility is an "H" shape. This creates challenges with employee movement. Dietary must roll their cart between units to deliver all meals, the cart is being cleaned as it enters a new unit. The cart is left at the door and trays delivered to the individual rooms by nursing, not dietary staff. This is a good practice.

Recommendations:

- Staffing levels remain low due to employees quarantining or being COVID-19 positive. Try to keep the same staff working on the same units as consistently as possible.
- Try to limit foot traffic through all units as much as possible.
- No Veterans should be allowed out of their rooms, including to do Rec. Therapy activities.
- Weekly surveillance testing of all Veterans and employees is taking several days to result, making it an unreliable tool for decisions about isolating Veterans or quarantining employees. However, the facility has the ability to test symptomatic patients and get results quickly through their local hospital, although they worry about running out of testing supplies. Anything that can be done to support quicker turn around times for testing would help the facility make decisions in real time. I recommend NH Public Health Dept. supporting this in any way possible.
- During my visit I saw some nursing staff cleaning. However, I did not see any Housekeeping staff. I recommended the facility ask for more Housekeeping staff to be brought in. If this is not possible I recommend they look at their current Housekeeping staff and map out the best way to clean all high touch surfaces in all areas at least once per day. They also need Housekeeping support to quickly and thoroughly clean rooms of positive patients before another patient is moved in there.
- They have limited cleaning wipes but have been given effective spray cleaners to use. I recommended they continue to ask NH Public Health Dept. for more wipes, as these are easier/quicker to clean with.
- I recommend they remove all paper and clutter from walls, nurses station, common areas. This will make it much easier to accomplish effective cleaning of all surfaces. They can also cover clean equipment with plastic if it needs to be stored in a common area.
- N95 use: they have received N95 masks from NH Public Health Dept. but are struggling to complete fit testing on all employees. They have a machine and a nurse practitioner that can do medical clearance. However, they have many N95 brands and are trying waste as little as possible. Maybe (b)(6) can provide them with some educational information on fit testing or information about common N95 brands. Some staff that have not been fit tested are wearing KN95's, which are not as effective as N95's.
- I identified a large gap with employee adherence to infection control recommendations. It is very possible this is contributing to continued transmission and increasing cases. I recommend daily huddles or messaging from leadership to each shift leader or nurse manager reminding all employees of the need to properly wear their mask and eye protection, donning/doffing appropriately, hand hygiene constantly. I recommend supervisors be given the ability to discipline employees if these protocols are not followed.
- No food or personal belongings should be located inside the COVID-19 positive unit.
- Employees working in the COVID-19 positive unit should remain in their mask and other PPE at all times. They should be relieved for breaks for water, food, and bathroom outside the unit. This has been challenging due to low staffing.
- The facility should designate break areas or break rooms and post maximum capacity signs. Remove all extra chairs. Instruct employees to remain socially distanced while eating in these rooms. Eating and drinking should only occur in these break areas, that way masks are on at all times in patient care areas.

Thankyou,

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